



**Rutherford County Office Building  
289 N. Main Street  
Rutherfordton, NC 28139**

**Rutherford County  
Board of Commissioners  
Minutes of March 26, 2026**

**Monday, March 26, 2026  
4:00 PM**

**I. Call to Order**

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Chairman King called the March 26, 2026 special meeting of the Rutherford County Board of Commissioners to order.

**Present:** Chairman Bryan King, Vice Chairman Alan Toney, Commissioner Michael Benfield, Commissioner Hunter Haynes, and Commissioner Donnie Haulk.

**A. Agenda Approval**

**Commissioner Haulk moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Benfield seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was:**

**Ayes:** Commissioner King, Commissioner Toney, Commissioner Benfield, Commissioner Haynes, and Commissioner Haulk.

**II. New Business**

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**A. ID-26-4432 Administrative and Board Planning Workshop**

Chairman King reiterated the purpose of the workshops that the Board has been scheduling monthly which was the coming together to openly discuss their concerns and priorities in a collaborative setting.. He has been attending meetings with Rutherford County department heads regarding their requested budgets for Fiscal Year 2025-2026. There are remaining meetings that are scheduled through the end of March. Following the conclusion of these meetings a notebook will be provided to Commissioners with recommended funding for the departments.

The Board of Education will receive their recommended budget from the Superintendent, and this will be forwarded to the Board of Commissioners in April. No decision has been made at this time regarding the offer of the ROC school by the Board of Education to the Commissioners.

Chairman King advised that he had gained more insight into the budget process by being a part of the departmental budget meetings this year. It has helped him identify potential concerns. Commissioner Benfield had been present for the departmental budget meetings on one day.

Commissioner Haynes expressed interest in appointing an Interim County Manager. Commissioner Haulk had approached a possible candidate regarding the position, but the candidate had declined. Chairman King voiced his concern regarding finding a qualified interim candidate who would be willing to serve short term.

A meeting had been held with the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners regarding their assistance in hiring a new County Manager. NCACC does offer a strategic advisory service, and advisors are former county manager. Their role would be to provide input during the application review process. A possible timeline would be to list the job in May, begin interviews in July with a possible hire date in October. There was discussion regarding the possibility of involving newly elected Commissioners who could participate in discussion but would not have voting authority.

Chairman King also reminded the Board that several positions on boards and commissions which had been filled by the former County Manager are still unfilled but will be reviewed at a future meeting.

Some concerns which had been discussed at the departmental budget meetings were

1. Current radios are nearing expiration. These will need to be replaced by VIPER radios at a potential cost of \$2,000,000. This replacement will occur over time.
2. Human Resources Department raised concerns about insurance costs.
3. Discussion with staff of the Solid Waste Department included common but varying levels of concern regarding PFAS substances, not applying the enterprise fund model for the funding of this department, and potential possible savings by using an incinerator. These topics will be discussed during budget sessions of the County Commissioners.
4. Budget sessions have been held with E911, Fire Marshal/Emergency Management, and EMS.

Some remaining departments that are still awaiting meetings are Sheriff's Department, Department of Social Services, and Board of Elections. This will complete County departments, but there are possible meetings with the Board of Education and Isothermal Community College Board of Trustees. Chairman King reported that feedback from departments has been positive.

Finance Director Paula Roach provided a financial overview stating that over \$2,000,000 was appropriated from fund balance this year. A significant FEMA reimbursement was received recently.

Commissioner Benfield advised that the County has a potential \$5,000,000 funding opportunity for airport improvements which is eligible due to a safety-related classification.

**III. Adjournment**

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**At 5:10 P.M. Commissioner Benfield made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Haulk seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was:**

**Ayes:** Commissioner King, Commissioner Toney, Commissioner Benfield, Commissioner Haynes and Commissioner Haulk.

**Noes:** None

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Chairman, Board of Commissioners

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Vice Chairman, Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

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Clerk, Board of Commissioners